The Lighthouse Community Mental Health Hub is a mental health peer support charity, based in Kendal and serving the South Lakeland area of Cumbria. The Lighthouse holds peer support drop-ins and groups to help people who have been diagnosed with a mental health condition or need to boost their emotional wellbeing. The Lighthouse provides a comfortable and safe space with non-judgemental peer support volunteers, where people can go and chat, or just sit in the company of others who understand.

Why was your organisation founded?

The Lighthouse Community Mental Health Hub was created to fill the gap in mental health peer support following the closure of South Lakeland Mind in March 2019.

What services does your organisation offer?

For the year prior to the pandemic we provided 'cuppa and chat' drop-in groups, at least once a day from our base in Stricklandgate House in Kendal, plus a weekly outreach group in both Windermere and Grange-over-Sands. Within these groups were specialist groups such as the very popular women's group, a craft group and a fibromyalgia and myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) support group. We also offered activities such as cookery at the Heron Cornmill in Beetham and walks.

A year after initially opening, we were yet again faced with having to close our doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. So in the few weeks following the start of the first lockdown, we created Beacon, a remote befriending service. We recruited and trained 20 new volunteers, all via video call, and the service has proved extremely beneficial and the demand is constantly growing. We have many ideas for future services and activities, so watch this space!

How many people use your services every year?

We currently have over 60 people registered with the drop-in groups, and over 30 people being supported through Beacon Befriending Service.

Feedback from people using the service:

"The Lighthouse has truly lived up to its name by providing a beacon of hope and progress. Illuminating the path to a significant improvement in my mental health through support and nurturing. Finding somewhere where I felt both safe and relaxed away from my safe space at home was a massive stepping stone in moving forward from self-isolation and crippling social anxiety. From simple social interaction over a brew, through gentle encouragement and reinforcement, to a genuine feeling of welcome and belonging The Lighthouse has excelled in providing a much needed and appreciated support facility in the local community," Mark.

Can you tell us about any future projects?

We are working on a selection of partnerships and activities which are in the very early stages of development but are not yet ready for full promotion.

Are there any opportunities to get involved?

We are always happy to accept interest from new peer support volunteers, either to help run the groups or as a befriender. You can find out more at The Lighthouse website here.